(c) if so, what are the details of the new policy and the impact it would have on the public sector airlines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (c) The draft Civil Aviation Policy is being finalised in consultation with various Ministries and Departments.

Airlink between historical places in Tamil Nadu

619. SHRI S. S. CHANDRAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:-

(a) whether Government are aware of historical importance of Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, Tiruchirapalli and Thanjavur districts of Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, whether Government will come forward to provide Airlink in between these historical places; and

(c) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) No such proposal is under consideration of the Government to airlink these places. However, Madurai, Tiruchirapalli and Trivandrum airports, which are nearest to Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga and Thanjavur respectively are well connected by Indian Airlines/Jet Airways flights.

Regular flights between Srinagar, Leh and Kargil

620. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU): Will the MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether an airport has been constructed at Kargil which lies out of use for months together every year;

(b) whether there is any proposal to introduce regular flights between Srinagar, Leh and Kargil, if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) whether there are no arrangements for supply of provisions and consumer goods for employees maintaining the Kargil airport and the infrastructure thereof and if so, the steps being taken to make regular supplies of consumer goods available to them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) At the behest of State Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Airports Aurhority of India (AAI) has developed a new civil airport at Kargil to enable air-connectivity to this region and boost tourism. Regular use of the airport is yet to commence.

(b) Indian Airlines is presently, operating regular services to Leh, the nearest airport to Kargil, from Delhi, Jammu, Srinagar and Chandigarh. Airlines plan their operations on the basis of their judgement on commercial and operational viability. At present, Airlines have no plan to introduce air services to Kargil.

(c) Since this airport has not been commissioned for operations so far, no Airports Aurhority of India (AAI's) staff is posted there, at present. However, the employees of the Border Roads organisation and J & K State PWD, who were assigned the works of development of this airport, are still positioned at this airport, and no complaint regarding non-availability of consumer goods to them has been received by AAI so far.

Purchase of long range aircrafts by IA

621. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Airlines has decided to purchase 17 long range aircrafts;

(b) if so, the routes on which the same are proposed to be introduced as replacement or fresh induction; and

(c) the estimated cost of the aircraft and the steps taken for procurement thereof, indicating the supply proposals under consideration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (c) Indian Airlines has submitted a project report proposing acquisition of 43 aircraft at a net projected cost of Rs. 10,089 crores. The new aircraft are envisaged to replace the existing fleet of A-300 nd B-737-200 in a phased manner.